In the claims

The following amendments are made with respect to the claims in the international application PCT/JP2004/002920.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in this application.

1 (currently amended). A method for assessing whether a test sample activates the intestinal tract immune system, comprising the steps of:

(a) contacting a test sample with a cell ~~forced to express~~ expressing an intestinal tract tissue-expressed Toll-like receptor; and

(b) measuring activity of the Toll-like receptor using signal transduction in the cell as an indicator,

wherein the test sample is judged to be activating the intestinal tract immune system if the activity of the Toll-like receptor is increased as compared to activity of the Toll-like receptor in a cell not contacted with the test sample.

2 (currently amended). The method, according to claim 1, wherein said method is used to screen ~~A method of screening~~ for a sample that activates the intestinal tract immune system, wherein the method comprises ~~comprising~~ the steps of:

(a) assessing whether a plurality of test samples activate the intestinal tract immune system by the assessment method of claim 1; and

(b) selecting from the plurality of test samples those assessed to activate the intestinal tract immune system.

3 (original). A method for producing a pharmaceutical composition that activates the intestinal tract immune system, comprising the steps of claim 2, and a further step of mixing

the sample assessed to activate the intestinal tract immune system with a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

4 (currently amended). The method, according to claim 1, wherein said method is used to assess ~~A method for assessing~~ whether a test microorganism activates the intestinal tract immune system, comprising the steps of:

(a) preparing an extract from a test microorganism;

(b) contacting the extract with a cell ~~forced to express~~ expressing an intestinal tract tissue-expressed Toll-like receptor; and

(c) measuring activity of the Toll-like receptor using signal transduction in the cell as an indicator,

wherein the test microorganism is judged to be activating the intestinal tract immune system if the activity of the Toll-like receptor is increased as compared to activity of the Toll-like receptor in a cell not contacted with the extract.

5 (currently amended). ~~A method of screening~~ The method, according to claim 4, wherein said method is used to screen for a microorganism that activates the intestinal tract immune system, comprising the steps of:

(a) assessing whether a plurality of test microorganisms activate the intestinal tract immune system by the assessment method of claim 4; and

(b) selecting from the plurality of test microorganisms those assessed to activate the intestinal tract immune system.

6 (original). A method for producing a food composition that activates the intestinal tract immune system, comprising the steps of claim 5, and a further step of mixing the

microorganism assessed to activate the intestinal tract immune system with a dietarily acceptable carrier.

7 (currently amended). The method of claim 6, wherein the microorganism is a lactic acid bacterium ~~and the food composition is a dairy product~~.

8 (canceled).

9 (canceled).

10 (original). A method for constructing a model intestinal immunocompetent cell, comprising the step of introducing into a cell an expression vector comprising a DNA encoding an intestinal tract tissue-expressed Toll-like receptor.

11 (currently amended). Use of a cell ~~forced to express~~ expressing an intestinal tract tissue-expressed Toll-like receptor as a model intestinal immunocompetent cell.

12 (currently amended). The method of ~~any one of claims 1 to 11~~ claim 1, wherein the intestinal tract tissue is intestinal lymphoid tissue.

13 (original). The method of claim 12, wherein the intestinal lymphoid tissue is Peyer's patch or intestinal lymph node.

14 (currently amended). The method of ~~any one of claims 1 to 13~~ claim 1, wherein the Toll-like receptor is derived from swine.

15 (currently amended). The method of ~~any one of claims 1 to 13~~ claim 1, wherein the Toll-like receptor is Toll-like receptor 9.

16 (currently amended). A cell ~~forced to express~~ that expresses an intestinal tract tissue-expressed Toll-like receptor ~~for use in the method of any one of claims 1 to 9~~.

17 (currently amended). ~~A model intestinal immunocompetent cell~~ The cell, according to claim 16 constructed by introducing into a cell an expression vector comprising a DNA encoding an intestinal tract tissue-expressed Toll-like receptor.

18 (currently amended). The cell of claim 16 ~~or 17~~, wherein the intestinal tract tissue is intestinal lymphoid tissue.

19 (original). The cell of claim 18, wherein the intestinal lymphoid tissue is Peyer's patch or intestinal lymph node.

20 (currently amended). The cell of ~~any one of claims 16 to 19~~ claim 16, wherein the Toll-like receptor is derived from swine.

21 (currently amended). The method of ~~any one of claims 16 to 19~~ claim 16, wherein the Toll-like receptor is Toll-like receptor 9.